

CINCINNATUS.

A LAY OF ANCIENT ROME AND MODERN ENGLAND.

[*Historical Reminder.*—LUCIUS QUINTUS CINCINNATUS, after being Consul in 480 B.C., retired to his farm and lived in perfect simplicity till he was summoned from the plough to become Dictator and extricate MINUCIUS from a tight corner in which he was being squeezed by the Æqui. After a rapid and brilliant campaign, L. Q. C. returned to his rural pursuits, having been absent only sixteen days.]

I.

THEN out spake CINCINNATUS,
And smote upon his plough ;—
“What would ye, O Quirites,
What are ye after now?
Has our old friend MINUCIUS
Sustained another rout,
And do you want a man of parts
To go and pull him out?
Great should be his discretion,
High courage his should be;
Can I be right in gathering
That Rome has chosen me?”

Have I not sworn, and often,
By the nine leading gods,
That I, who once was Consul,
Have done with lictors' rods?
Did I not frankly scuttle
To yonder frugal cot,
And state aloud that I was vowed
To plough my lonely plot?

Still, when I see you standing
In such momentous need,
Looking for someone likely
To rise and take the lead;
If you are short of bulwarks
For Rome to lean upon—
Why, I'm the man to meet your plan,
L. Q., in fact, is on!”

Few were the words he wasted,
His tone indeed was blunt,
As on the nail he donned his mail
And started for the front;
And ere ten days were over—
He had the Æquians broke,
And two by two propelled them through
The space beneath the yoke.
Six further days (sixteen in all)—
And he unwreathed his brow,
And turned again, a private swain,
To steer his private plough.
Thenceforth he stuck to furrows,
And only stirred from home
Once, to oblige the nation
And save the life of Rome.

II.

Such was the fair ideal
That fired the people's breast;
And, Saxon, shouldst thou haply deem
The ancient times were best;
Shouldst thou enquire what parallel
Our English annals yield—
I must proceed to cite the deed
Performed at Chesterfield!



Mr. Muddleton (whose day's fox-hunting is becoming quite interesting in the telling). "So I MUST HAVE RIDDEN SOME THIRTY MILES—OVER FENCES, DITCHES, AND EVERYTHING—STRAIGHT ACROSS COUNTRY AS THE FLY CROWS!"

Our modern CINCINNATUS,
Like him of Roman breed,
He too employed the ploughshare,
He loved the turfy mead;
Ex-Consul, Peer, and archer
Good at the long Scots bow,
Wild horses could not drag him
From where he lay so low.
Then came the cry of England
For action bold and prompt;
He saw our plight, he felt we might
Just any hour be swamped;
It was, he owned, a crisis
That might not brook delays,
And "I'll be with you, Sirs," he said,
"One of these autumn days."

Fast flew the circling seasons,
The last red leaves were gone,
When, "Ho!" he cried, "brave men
and tried,
I'm coming later on!"
And ere the winter ended
He kept that holy vow,
And straightway on the morrow
Was back behind the plough.

Once started, you will notice,
His feat was quickly done;
He brought the ancient record down
From sixteen days to one!

Only—the actual triumph
Omitted to occur;
And friends complained that things
remained
Precisely where they were. O. S.

AN UNDOUBTED CLAIM—IF UNIQUE.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I note, in connection with the Coronation, that very many esteemed citizens are anxious to serve the King as Larderers, Butlers, High Pantlers, and the like. I have also a desire to have a claim approved, which for certain reasons I have not submitted to the Court presided over by the Lord Chancellor. It is that of Chief Paragraphist-in-advance. I have written more about the Coronation than any other journalist, without troubling the Lord Chamberlain or any other official. Ought I not to get my reward in all fairness?

Your obedient Servant,
GREGORY GRUB PAPILLON.
British Museum, W.C.

SMALL POTATOES.

Q. Why are regular travellers by the Shepherd's Bush and City Railway like certain vegetables?

A. Because they're "Tubers."

DOMESTIC DRAMA.

THE CHILDREN'S BREAD.

WELL, JAMES? The Waits? No, tell them not to—oh! It's Mr. WACE. How very . . . How d'ye do? Oh, not at all. Delightful! JAMES, bring tea. You've brought the cold in with you.—Oh! and, JAMES,—Don't go before I've finished speaking, please,—Tell them to air *Miss Fido's* Jaeger sheets, At once. Poor love, she's perished with this weather. Yes, isn't it? Ah yes, the poor. Quite so! They must. I'm sure they do. But you're so wrong, You clergy. Yes, you are. You coddle them. Oh, but you do, you know. You know you do. Won't you sit down? You'll find—oh, no, not there! Take care! My precious *Fido*! Is she hurt? My sainty dainty! How you frightened me. Shall have a biccy, precious. Would you mind? So many thanks. That silver *bonbonnière*. He's werry sorry, pet, so don't be cross. Give him a nice wet kiss.

Ah, here comes tea.

Sugar and cream? One lump? Thanks, not for me. I'll wait, I think, till you have—afterwards. Now tell me, are you fond of—yes? How nice! Well then I must—I wonder if you'd like To see her little things, her odds and ends, And all her clothes—yes, *Fido's*. Sure you would? Yes, get them, JAMES, and don't forget the plates. Oh, yes, her very own. She never eats Off anything but silver,—never has.

Another cup? No? Well, I think you're wise: It does destroy one's appetite for dinner. And—yes, my sweet, what is it? Oh, of course! Her dinner. Yes, she always knows that word. Isn't it sweet of her? Yes, clever one Shall have its little din-din by-and-by. Oh, put them here, JAMES. Yes. And tell the cook To mince *Miss Fido's* kidneys very fine, And send them up directly they are done. She's positively starving, precious love. But—are there really? Children? Very sad! Improvidence, no doubt,—and drink, of course. But still it's most distressing.

Oh, don't go.

It's only parish business, I suppose? To carry lukewarm soup to some old woman, Or—is it that? What nonsense. Let her wait. Sit down again. Now, don't you like this brooch? Sweet, isn't it? Oh, dear me, no, they're real. Yes, diamonds. Let's see. I gave it her This time last year. I made them put the date In pearls. My own design. I always think—Don't you?—that Christmas is the time we ought To give to others of our very best.

Oh, but of course. Your Coal and Clothing Club? Delighted. Now this bangle, don't you think It's rather nice? A cat's-eye. No, quite cheap. Oh, those. Her little indiarubber shoes. Yes, for wet weather. She's so delicate, Poor precious darling. That's her *saut-de-lit*: Real Mechlin, yes. And here, you see, she's got A weeny pocket for her handkerchief. What's this? Oh, no; please wrap it up again. She mustn't see it yet. Her Christmas-box; A little sable coat. I've had it lined With mink. It's—not so very. Thirty pounds I think it was. It's much too cold for her

To be in England now that winter's here. She simply had to have it.

Must you go?

Well, if you really—ah, the Clothing Club! I quite forgot. What did I give last year? Five shillings? Well, I'll—yes, I'll make it ten, And half-a-crown from *Fido*: twelve and six. No, please don't thank me. It's the merest—what? Put *Fido* in your sermon! But how sweet! And what will be your text? "The Children's Bread!" That sounds quite charming, though, I must confess, I don't see what it has to do with dogs. Oh, shall I? Yes, of course I'll come. Goodbye.

G. F. C.

SAVOYVAL OF THE FITTEST.

QUITE the best of them—well, at all events, one of the very best of the light, tuneful and sparkling GILBERT-SULLIVAN comic operas—is *Iolanthe*, recently revived at the Savoy Theatre. "After all these many weary years," quavers the shaky, faithful old stage retainer of the very ancient school of drama, "do my eyes again behold my long-lost *Iolanthe*!"

The old typical "first night of a Savoy piece" was also revived, at least, so we gathered from the notice in the leading journal. Alas! not the entire audience of *Iolanthe's* première could be also revived, though it appears they were re-placed.

And what excellent stage-craft, aye, and front-of-the-house-craft too, it was, to point the topical allusion in the sung invocation to Captain SHAW (the distinguished Fire-Brigade Commander of that period, now, it is to be regretted, ex-tinguished as a fireman), by having the noble Captain present in person, hale and hearty, towards whom all eyes were turned and whose presence was acclaimed by the hands that applauded the words, the tune and the vocalisation. Ah! they understand these things down in Savoy.

And was the Captain of the Gallant Extinguishers "put out"? Not a bit of it. A great coup! But how about future performances, when the first fervour of revival shall have somewhat waned? Captain SHAW cannot be present there night after night, and *matinée* after *matinée*? Will a double, "made up" to resemble the Cap'en, be engaged regularly? Or will there be a wax effigy, the very image of the original hero, seated in the stalls, with working interior, after the fashion of the mechanical snuff-taking figure of Mr. COBBETT at Madame TUSSAUD's, to which simple visitors, stumbling over his toes, used to profoundly apologise? However, this extra attraction can be safely left to the ingenuity of the clever management.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

THE Academy of December 7, in quoting Mr. Punch's open letter to ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, added the information—

"Mr. SIDNEY COLVIN has announced his intention of dealing with the subject in his own time, which, we hope, will be soon."

With the Academical Editor Mr. Punch likewise expresses the same hope. But that "Mr. SIDNEY COLVIN has announced his intention" is rather reminiscently suggestive of the street row at Ipswich, *tempore Pickwickiano*, when the poetic Mr. Snodgrass, "in a truly Christian spirit and in order that he might take no one unawares, announced in a very loud tone that he was going to begin, and proceeded to take off his coat with the utmost deliberation."

Perhaps ere this number appears Mr. COLVIN will have gone in for the offender and finally disposed of him. Sic transit HENLEY!



PRINCE GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (to Welsh Dragon). "COME TO MY ARMS!"

The badge of the Red Dragon is now, by Royal command, added to the "achievement" of the Prince of Wales.

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NON SECUS IN BONIS.

(To the L. C. C.)

DEAR Council, take it not amiss
If I should venture to remind you
Of darker days preceding this,
Of anxious moments left behind you.

When first for London's love you sued,
Your zeal in her affairs professing
The daily paper's attitude
Was just a little bit depressing.

Before the butterfly emerged
The chrysalis was voted evil,
And you were very often urged
To go directly to the D-1.

And yet the self-same Press to-day
Your influence for good rehearses;
Who came to scoff remain to pray,
And blessings fill the room of curses.

Our drains are yours, in every park
With classic melodies you train us,
You quench the flames, you light the dark,
And license things to entertain us.

Now at your banquets not a sound
Is heard that could suggest detraction,
You are, when loving cups go round,
The toast of each opposing faction.

If we embrace Lord ROSEBERRY'S view,
Nought is too big for you to handle,
And, in respect of work, to you
The Houses cannot hold a candle.

But, oh—*verb. sap.*—continue good
(Think what a transient joy the rose is!),
Lest your fond parent's praises should
Become his child's apotheosis.

ANY PERSON;

Or Grandmotherly Government.

ON January the First there comes into operation an Act of Parliament whereby "the KING'S Most Excellent Majesty, with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal," ordains, by the authority of the same, that "Every holder of a licence who knowingly sells or delivers or allows any person to sell or deliver, save at the residence or working place of the purchaser, any description of intoxicating liquor to any person under the age of fourteen years for consumption by any person on or off the premises, excepting such intoxicating liquors as are sold or delivered in casked and sealed vessels in quantities not less than one reputed pint, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings on the first offence and not exceeding five pounds for any subsequent offence," the same punishments awaiting the senders for refreshment.

The expression "sealed," it is interesting to learn, means secured with any substance "without the destruction of which the cork, plug or stopper cannot be with-



REHEARSAL FOR CHRISTMAS.

Auntie. "WHAT MAKES YOU SO *SERIOUS*, TOMMY?"

Tommy. "WHY, MA TOLD ME THAT I MUST REMEMBER NOT TO ASK FOR ANYTHING TO EAT, AND I AM TRYING TO REMEMBER IT!"

drawn." As a matter of fact, thin strips of gummed paper are to be the restraining agents, and we can picture POLLY or BOBBY, carelessly removing the wet labels before arriving at the family mansion, and chuckling at the result, forgetful of the parental slap.

But the grand idea of the whole scheme is sublime in its loophole nature. There is absolutely no prohibition to the vendor of intoxicating liquors to send out by means of children under fourteen years of age as much beer, wine or spirits as his

customers demand, to their "residences or working places"! A corps of boy and girl Ale-bearers will surely be instituted and placed at the disposal of every licensed victualler. In the name of common sense, and in the hope that the householders will not be laying in stocks of liquor which they cannot afford to pay for, in order to avoid the "stopper" hindrance, *Mr. Punch* presents his ideas to the publicans and public, placing them "under flying seal" for the use of everybody, including the Lords Spiritual.

"STREET MUSIC."

"MUSIC hath charms," so SHAKESPEARE said,
 "To soothe the savage breast,"
 But I assured a friend one day
 It might become a pest.

My friend, JOHN SCRIBBLES, o'er this point
 Grew angry, almost coarse;
 Said I talked rot, and had no soul—
 He raved himself quite hoarse.

"Friend," I replied, "I know you live
 In a secluded spot;
 But come and spend some days with me,
 To judge if I talk rot."

Quite late one Saturday he came,
 And said on Sunday night:
 "Excuse me if I early rest,
 To-morrow I must write!"

"My dear old chap," I answered straight,
 "Seek what repose you can,
 It's precious little peace you'll find
 To write in, poor old man!"

We breakfasted at eight next day,
 And as the clock struck nine,
 Said SCRIBBLES, "Ere I set to work
 I'll send my wife a line."

I went into the sitting-room
 Old JOHN not to disturb,
 And, glancing at the window, saw
 An organ near the kerb.

The "Geisha," this was grinding out,
 When came a German band,
 Which rent the air with tunes well known
 To their loved Fatherland.

A few yards lower down the street
 A man on crutches stood,
 Who piped a sorely piercing air
 On instrument of wood.

The organ-man moved further down;
 The band played sadly still,
 A hurdy-gurdy hove in sight,
 And set to with a will!

Then there arrived a pallid youth
 Who grasped a violin,
 He played it opposite our house;—
 Can you conceive the din?

Well, at this juncture it appeared
 SCRIBBLES knocked down his chair,
 He rushed into my sitting-room,
 His hands thrust through his hair!

His language just at first was,—well—
 I'm glad you didn't hear;
 But, strictly now twixt you and me,
 For SCRIBBLES' soul I fear!

At last I thought it time to pour
 Into his mind some balm,
 So, giving him an easy chair,
 "SCRIBBLES," quoth I, "be calm!

"I am a fixture here, alas!
 You can reach home to-night;
 Before you go, I think you must
 Admit that I was right?"

"Yes!" SCRIBBLES screamed, "you've
 proved your point;
 Such music (!) is a pest!"
 Home he returned a wiser man
 In search of peace and rest!

M. D. V.

THE LAST (I HOPE) OF THE DANDIES.

*A Touching Drama in One Act, by
 Crude Fudge.*

SCENE—Bore House, Lady BLESSINGTON'S
 famous residence in Kensington. Count
 D'ORSAY and that lady are engaged in
 pinning numbers on the furniture in
 preparation for the auctioneer.

D'Orsay (pausing in his work). Is it
 usual, dear Lady BLESSINGTON, for persons
 in our position, however insolvent, to do
 this kind of thing?

Lady Blessington (meekly). It is an
 American custom, I believe.

D'O. It is excessively fatiguing. (Enter
 Valet.) Well?

Valet. Lord RAOUL ARDALE to see you,
 Sir.

D'O. The young man who saved my life
 yesterday when my horses ran away in
 the Park? Show him up. [Exit Valet.]

Lady B. I will leave you to entertain
 him.

[Lady BLESSINGTON goes out L. as Valet
 enters R. with Lord RAOUL.]

Valet. Lord RAOUL ARDALE. [Exit.]

D'O. My preserver! I am delighted to
 see you. It is true your clothes are de-
 testable, but as you saved my life I will
 overlook it. [Shakes him by the hand.]

Lord Raoul. This friendly attitude is
 very gratifying. It emboldens me to ask
 you for something.

D'O. (alarmed). Not money, I hope?

Lord R. No, only for your assistance
 in persuading Lady BLESSINGTON to let
 me marry her niece.

D'O. Certainly, my dear fellow. Cer-
 tainly.

Lord R. You see, I'm really awfully
 fond of her. And as I've no money what-
 ever, of course I feel I can show my affec-
 tion for her best by asking her to marry
 me.

D'O. Unquestionably. At the same
 time, I don't quite see what you're to
 live on.

Lord R. I thought of selling my Com-
 mission in the Guards. That would keep
 us going for six months.

D'O. I don't think selling your Com-
 mission would help you much. I believe
 some people make a living by selling on
 commission. But it's not considered a
 genteel occupation.

Lord R. I suppose not.

D'O. Under the circumstances your
 marriage would be something of an im-
 prudence?

Lord R. (depressed). So my mother
 thinks.

D'O. Sensible woman! I should like to
 meet her.

Lord R. You can if you like. I left her
 below in the carriage.

D'O. Send her up, my dear fellow.
 Goodbye. I'm afraid I can't shake hands
 with you again. Your clothes are too
 depressing. Goodbye.

[Exit Lord RAOUL. A moment later
 enter Lady SOMERSHIRE.]

Lady Somershire. Good morning, Count
 D'ORSAY!

D'O. Good morning!

Lady S. (sternly). We have met before,
 Count.

D'O. Surely not?

Lady S. (bitterly). Considering that in
 earlier days you seduced me under prom-
 ise of marriage—

D'O. To be sure. So I did. How care-
 less of me to forget. But I have a
 wretched memory. (Aside.) I wonder
 what her name was.

Lady S. But it was not to revive pain-
 ful recollections that I came here. I only
 wish to ask you to use your influence with
 my son to prevent his marrying Lady
 BLESSINGTON'S niece. As I have known
 my son for years, while you met him for
 the first time yesterday, your influence
 with him is naturally greater than mine.
 I rely on you to do this.

D'O. I should have thought, dear Lady
 SOMERSHIRE, that you had had enough of
 relying on me.

Lady S. I have. (Darkly.) But there
 is a special reason why you should oblige
 me in this matter.

D'O. And what is that, dear Lady?

Lady S. Well—ahem—it's a delicate
 thing to say; but, you see, RAOUL is your
 son as well as mine.

D'O. God bless my soul, you don't say
 so? Why, I felt drawn to the fellow the
 moment he stopped my runaway horses.
 Wonderful thing paternal instinct!

Lady S. Considering how completely
 you had forgotten his mother the instinct
 is certainly curious.

D'O. Curious, but highly creditable,
 don't you think? Anyhow, I'm sure he'll
 see it in that light, dear fellow!

Lady S. (horrificed.) He? RAOUL? But
 you mustn't breathe a word of this to him.

D'O. Not tell him? Absurd! Think how
 pleased he'll be! The son of Count
 D'ORSAY! What an honour!

Lady S. (bitterly). After believing all
 his life that he is the legitimate son of a
 nobleman he will certainly be delighted to
 learn that he is the illegitimate son of a
 beggar! People always are.

D'O. (shocked). My dear Lady, what
 expressions!

Lady S. Well, you are a beggar, aren't
 you?

D'O. Don't let us go into that painful
 question. In point of fact, you do not
 think he will be altogether pleased at the
 news?



Slowcoach, Esquire (to Lady, passing him on fast roarer). "I HEARD YOU COMING FROM A LONG DISTANCE!"
Lady. "DID YOU? WELL, NOW YOU'LL SEE ME GOING FROM A MUCH LONGER DISTANCE. GOOD BYE!"

Lady S. I should think he wouldn't!

D'O. This is very disappointing. Must I strangle this nascent paternal affection almost before I have begun to feel it? It seems hard.

Lady S. Nonsense! If you can forget the mother, you can forget the son. Try and exercise a little common sense. And remember that you must prevent this marriage.

D'O. What a task for parental tenderness!

Lady S. Pooh! I'll send him up to you, and you can tell him you can't assist his suit. [Exit.]

D'O. What a woman! She has no heart at all. And to think that twenty years ago I loved her! I wish I could remember what her name was.

Enter Lord RAOUL. He goes up to D'ORSAY eagerly.

Lord Raoul. You are going to plead my cause with Lady BLESSINGTON?

D'O. (aside). Still those terrible clothes! Down, fluttering heart! (Aloud.) Well, no, my young friend. To tell you the truth, I have just promised your dear mother to do nothing of the kind.

Lord R. I say, confound it all—

D'O. You see, you've no money.

Lord R. I've twenty pounds in bank notes.

D'O. (eagerly). Have you them about you?

Lord R. Yes; in my pocket.

[Produces them.]

D'O. (taking them). Thanks. A thousand thanks, dear fellow!

Lord R. I say, you mustn't take those. They're all the money I've got in the world.

D'O. They're all the money I've got in the world!

Lord R. (annoyed). Look here! just you give me them back.

D'O. (indignant). Ungrateful son—ahem—I should say man! Do you mean to tell me you don't feel irresistibly impelled to give me these paltry notes?

Lord R. I can't say I do.

D'O. (aside). These instincts of kinship seem curiously one-sided. (Aloud.) I have an idea. I'll go to CROCKFORD's with these, and if I win you shall have the money. That will help you immensely!

Lord R. Noble fellow!

D'O. (proudly). Oh, I'm awfully generous—with CROCKFORD's money.

Lord R. But what will you do?

D'O. Oh, I'm going abroad. It seems the only honourable course when you owe as much as I do. Lady BLESSINGTON is selling her furniture, and that will pay for my ticket.

Lord R. And after that?

D'O. Oh, I shall settle in Paris.

Lord R. But what will you live on?

D'O. (airily). Art, my dear fellow, Art—and my creditors.

Lord R. (admiringly). You are so full of resources!

D'O. And finally, when I die, I shall die in my best coat and waistcoat, like a gentleman. No gentleman could possibly die in the sort of clothes you have on at this moment. They have no style. I shall stand up before my mirror and make the most extraordinary faces, and then I shall fall dead in the arms of Sir EDWARD BULWER LYTTON. Touching, eh? Good morning!

[Bows him out and thoughtfully pockets the twenty pounds.]

(Curtain.) ST. J. H.

"RECEIPT FOR VALUE."—Received, a stamped envelope, sealed (so that its contents could not be ascertained), and forwarded by Mr. P. to "The Montagu Williams Blanket Fund," from "EDITH MOWNERY," apparently, but signature not clear.

REPUTED QUARTZ.—Gold taken out in pints—according to prospectus.

A. S. S.

("Associated" Shareholders' Soirée.)

THERE are more things, HO-RA-TI-O,
Than ever you dreamt about;
But it's only fair that folks should
know
Your recipe, when in doubt.

It's quite the thing in financial schools
To a "private meeting" hold;
For this is the first of a set of rules,
And the gulls do as they're told.

Then next of "a frugal lunch" they
eat,
And gaze on the wine when red,
Till at 3 P.M. the others meet
To be innocently led,

It's talk, talk, talk, for an hour or more,
And when you've had your say,
They know as much as they did before,
And delightedly go away.

PING-PONG PROPER.

The Scene is in a large hall in an outlying suburb, during the progress of a Ping-Pong Tournament "open to all comers." The hall is furnished with four trestle tables stained darkgreen, across each of which a white net is adjusted. Surrounding the tables at a little distance from them are two rows of chairs, filled with spectators. At each of the tables men and ladies are playing with a tense seriousness and pent-up anxiety that is almost hysterical. Crowded in the centre of the hall and streaming up and down the avenues between the "courts" is an intensely excited mass of people: local champions with vellum bats protruding from their bosoms; reverend fathers waiting on the victory of their unbeaten youngest; pretty cousins in sables wanting to know when he will play; anxious mammas with flaming cheeks getting hints for future ping-pong parties; besides grave smile-lorn umpires carrying formidable scoring-boards. It is four o'clock. The atmosphere is tropical. There is an incessant ping-pong-ping-pong-ping-pong—not unlike a lull in the Parrot House at the Zoo. Occasional outbursts of clapping and other forms of applause add to the din. At the doorway a slim, ascetic man is accosted by a short, purple-faced boy three sizes too large for his clothes.

Purple-faced Boy. Hullo, STIGGS, you ping-ponging?

Slim Man. Yes. Thought I might as well enter. I—I feel in a ghastly funk.

P.-f. Boy. Funk, I should think so. I've been watching them at No. 2 table, and they're frightfully hot. Do you know who you have to play? (Slim man shakes his head weakly.) The Catford Champion.

One of the hottest men on the cross half-volley shots there is.

[Slim man "gives" at the knees.

P.-f. Boy. No drawing-room game this, STIGGS. Serves at a frightful lick, with a tricky back-hand swish-sh.

[Goes through the exact mode with great energy, at which the Slim Man's jaw drops. He fingers his bat nervously.

Slim Man. (with great courage, pulling himself together). I—I wonder where he is?

P.-f. Boy. Come on, we'll go and find him. Long legs—got an enormous reach. [They edge their way through a cluster of people and disappear.

* * * * *

A lean child, with thick legs and a pig-tail, is playing against a tall, gaunt lady, with high eyebrows, in a black dress, with a yellow rosette of the bigness of a soup-plate. Near by is sitting Lean Child's mother, a stout spreading lady of an excitable nature.

Umpire (at side of table, drearily). Seventeen, eighteen.

Mother (clapping furiously, and beaming triumphantly on all within the radius of her smiles). Eighteen! Well-played, CLARA! Well-played! (To a friend.) Twenty's the game. CLARA's a point ahead. She's playing up. (Confidentially, to another friend.) Never been beaten. We've had all the lady champions up at our place, and CLARRY's beaten them one after the other.

Umpire. Nineteen—eighteen.

Mother. Nineteen—eighteen, CLARRY! (Appealing distractedly.) A point behind! Give her one of your twisters. Make your balls shoot. You can do it with pa and me.

Umpire (monotonously as before). Nineteen all!

Mother (standing up in perspiration and frenzy). Bra-vo!

Lean Child (with chilling dignity). Ma, do, for goodness' sake, keep calm. You're making me look ridiculous. Remember this is a tournament!

Mother (contritely). Oh, CLARRY! I can't help it. My nerves are all jumpy!

[The Lean Child becomes suddenly disconcerted, and the Gaunt Lady wins. Being a local "fancy," the applause is deafening. The Lean Child is quarrelling with her mother. The mother is expostulating with the Umpire, and the victorious lady is being violently caressed by her "backers" as the crowd surges in and veils them from sight.

* * * * *

A flabby-looking youth, with woe-begone expression, is listening to a bald-headed, thick-set little man, with heavy blonde moustache, who has just beaten his man. Bald-headed Gent. My dear chap, I

played all round him. I took every service. He's got a drive like the Scotch Express, but I took 'em all. And he's one of the hottest men Hackney have. He led me up to ten, I led him at fifteen, and then I got into my stride and simply romped home, twenty—sixteen. What did you do?

Flabby Youth (disconsolately). Got licked. Bald-headed Gent. Why, whatever were you doing?

Flabby Youth (slowly drawing from his pocket, like a conjurer, a long parchment bat). Feel that. (Bald-headed Gent rubs his fingers sympathetically over the surface and utters an expression of dismay.) Limp, isn't it? What could you expect? I couldn't get one drive off. Simply couldn't make the blessed pill travel an inch. Worst of these halls where the gas is in the ceiling. How's a fellow to warm up his bat? I went up to the referee and told him. There ought to be a fire. Next tournament I play in I shall stipulate for a fire, or a gas-stove or something, and get my bat taut.

Bald-headed Gent (tapping him on the shoulder, emphatically). My dear boy. Take my tip and get a vellum bat. Those parchment bats are doomed absolutely.

[Violent applause drowns further observations.

* * * * *

There is a sudden movement among the crowd towards No. 4 table. All the chairs become filled, and a general excitement prevails as a tall, long-necked man, in a tennis shirt without a collar, fiercely grasping a uniquely constructed weapon, steps towards the table and lightly tosses a ball up in the air with frightful nerve.

An eager-eyed Girl. Oh! do come, Pa. It's the best match of the whole tournament. He's the South London Champion. Pa (unsympathetically). Don't think much of his looks.

[Another burst of excitement takes place as his rival breaks away from a little feverish group of backers and takes up his position opposite his rival. He is a youth with fan-like ears and a low forehead.

A Curate (gratuitously, to a fervid devotee of the game, seated next to him). These men are supposed to be rather good, aren't they?

Fervid Devotee (almost incoherently). Good! I should just think they were. It'll be a tough fight. (Nods with proud familiarity to new comer.) I know him.

Curate (unimpassioned). Who are they?

Fervid Devotee. Tall chap's BUTCHER, South London Champion. Absolutely unbeaten. Won the Herne Hill Tournament with ease. Nobody got near him. Little chap's TINGLER. Got a forehand drive that simply knocks spots off the best player ever put up against him. Clapham's finest

exponent of game. Look out! They 've begun!

[The game proceeds. Every stroke, every movement is rapturously enjoyed. Excitement rises to fever heat. Nerves are stretched to snapping-point as the two doughty champions contend for the honour of their district. Everybody goes mad with excitement, which is only accentuated by the ping-ponging of the bats, the tropical heat, and the desperate character of the game. Everything after this is bathos.

W. H. M.

THE GHOST OF AN IDEA.

DEAR PUNCH.—As I remember years ago you used not to show much apprehension on the appearance of an apparition in white, I venture to address you. I know you won't be frightened of me. I have a complaint to make. I belong to a very respectable corporation, or, perhaps I should call it, in-corporation, of spectres. My friends and myself are really fairly intelligent. We most of us belong to the best families, and this being so, we are greatly disgusted at being credited with the most idiotic proceedings. One of us is said to appear at midnight to shake his head out of a window. Another strides up to a fire and pokes it three times, and then vanishes. Then couples of us walk up and down corridors, and sigh as if we were suffering from a nightmare, possibly created by an indigestible supper. There is no end of the silly things we are supposed to do. And what makes the matter worse is the fact that the slanders are all circulated on hearsay evidence. No one has really seen us making fools of ourselves as recounted. Now, *Punch*—good old *Punch*—this is Christmas-time, when stories of the character to which I have referred will be—to use a colloquialism—all over the shop. Ridicule the cruel custom, my dear friend, and secure the hearty gratitude of

Yours faithfully, A GHOST BOGIE.
The Shades.

THE WICKED WIRE.

[“The telephone may not be an unmixed blessing.”—*Daily Paper*.]

SCENE—Author's sanctum. TIME—The hour of inspiration. PRESENT—Gifted Individual.

Gifted Individual (settling himself down to work). Now, I think I have got the second act well in hand. (Referring to mems.) Conversation between hero and heroine. Comic incident. Romantic incident. Excellent curtain. Come, I think I ought to have the act ready for the copyist by four o'clock. (Ring.) Why, it's that telephone!

[Puts ear to receiver.

Voice. Are you Mr. TENNYSON BROWN?



Customer (looking in at door). “OH, I LL CALL AGAIN LATER!”
Barber. “COME IN, SIR! WON'T KEEP YOU A MINUTE, SIR. THIS WON'T TAKE ME LONG, SIR!”

G. I. Yes. Who are you?

Voice. Well, a great friend of yours who knows you says you are most charitable, and if you would send me a postal order for ten shillings—

G. I. Certainly not. (Drops receiver.) Let me see. Yes, hero and heroine discovered. (Ring.) Well, what is it?

Voice. I say, I have just found your name on the list—how are you?

G. I. Very busy.

Voice. You remember me, don't you? I was at school with you thirty years ago. My name's SCRUBBY—you remember SCRUBBY major, don't you?

G. I. (brutally). No, I don't. (Drops receiver.) Let me see. They are watching the sunset. (Bell.) Well, what is it now?

Voice. How is dear MORSY?

G. I. Out with the children, and I am really very busy.

Voice. Oh, I wouldn't bother you for a moment, but you are so much nearer Regent Street than I am, that I thought you wouldn't mind calling on BRASS AND ORMOLU the jewellers.

G. I. Sorry, not going out to-day. (Drops receiver.) Now let me see, where was I? Oh, watching the sunset. (Ring.) What is it now?

Voice. My dear son-in-law, you know sweet MORSY arranged that I should come on a visit.

G. I. (furiously). Oh, did she? Well, I can't settle anything until I see her.

Voice. Then do you mind asking her at once.

G. I. (grimly). Oh, certainly. Just wait until I have found her!

[Cuts wire and completely severs communication. Curtain shuts out a scene of guilty triumph.



MR. MOZAMBIQUE, WHO HAS RENTED LORD NOKASH'S WELL-KNOWN SHOOTING, DRIVES A SELECT PARTY TO THE COVERTS!

THE COUNTRY VISITOR'S DIARY OF THE CATTLE-SHOW WEEK.

UP for the Show, taking DOLLY and ROSE: Monday—the Hippodrome, Madame Tus-saud's,

Tuesday—went shopping all day at the Stores,

Wednesday—had headache, stayed all day indoors,

Thursday—a *matinée*, had to take stalls,

Friday—the Abbey, the Tower, St. Paul's, Saturday—home again, fagged out. Well, no—

Somehow we couldn't find time for the Show.

PREHISTORIC PEPYS.

(A recently deciphered MS. from Mykenai.)

Lakedaimon, 1190 B.C.—Hearing of the white arms of HELEN, and seeing a great crowd of gallants in the town, all hot on the wench, I also to Court in my best coloured camelot chiton of flowered tabby vest, and did enter my name as a wooer, my wife being in Athens. By-and-by HELEN, the greatest beauty I ever saw, I think, in all my life, whom I did eye mightily, being dressed this day in fair hair, mighty pretty. With her PENELOPE, a modest maid whom I did labour to take by the hand; but she would not, but prudently got further and

further away, and near to ODYSSEUS. And then I fell to gazing on another pretty maid, HELEN's sister; she looked mighty out of humour, seeing AGAMEMNON toy with HELEN's curls.

1196 B.C.—To the market place, and did hear that HELEN, as looked for, was off with PARIS, MENELAUS being absent; whereat much talk of war, some saying that MENELAUS had sent ambassadors to Ilium. Fell in with one from Ithaka and told me ODYSSEUS was mightily against the war, being still in love with his wife, PENELOPE, and would not leave her; and another said AGAMEMNON was in tears in Mykenai because of KLYTEMNAISTRA; he himself was mighty earnest for the wars and another sight of HELEN, and she not.

1195 B.C.—To Aulis, where the greatest concourse that ever I did see in all my life, I in my new suit of armour with the brazen helmet and greaves; cost me thirty oxen and very fine. To MENELAUS's tent, where a great council and many opinions about the war, MENELAUS vowing that it is just and inevitable, and that not only will we punish the evil-doer but also gain PRIAM's gold; but ODYSSEUS saying HELEN was a mighty flirt and jade, ill worth the spending of blood and treasure, being as much in the wrong as

PARIS. Whereat a great shout of "pro-Trojan" and would not hear him more.

1194 B.C.—By water to Ilium. Found that the town has walls and PRIAM fifty sons, and so little fear of HELEN returning yet. Sent to Hellas for battering rams, whereby much delay.

1193 B.C.—Up betimes, hearing that battering-rams have arrived. War, so to speak, over; and so more troops from Hellas.

1190 B.C.—Siege still going on. Many sick with horseflesh, and so dead.

1187 B.C.—Abroad with MENELAUS, and passed by the walls where HELEN, an old hag, ogling HEKTOR; and we falling into discourse on women, I would needs ask him if he still had hankering for the jade, which he denied, but PRIAM's gold.

1185 B.C.—HEKTOR dead, and so wrote my wife to send no more tabby tuniques, eager to be gone. Called by AGAMEMNON's tent, and there heard a hundred teachers arriving from Athens, and will, I think, sing the *Harmodios-song* to the young captives. Very expensive!

"MADE IN GERMANY."—MISTAKES.



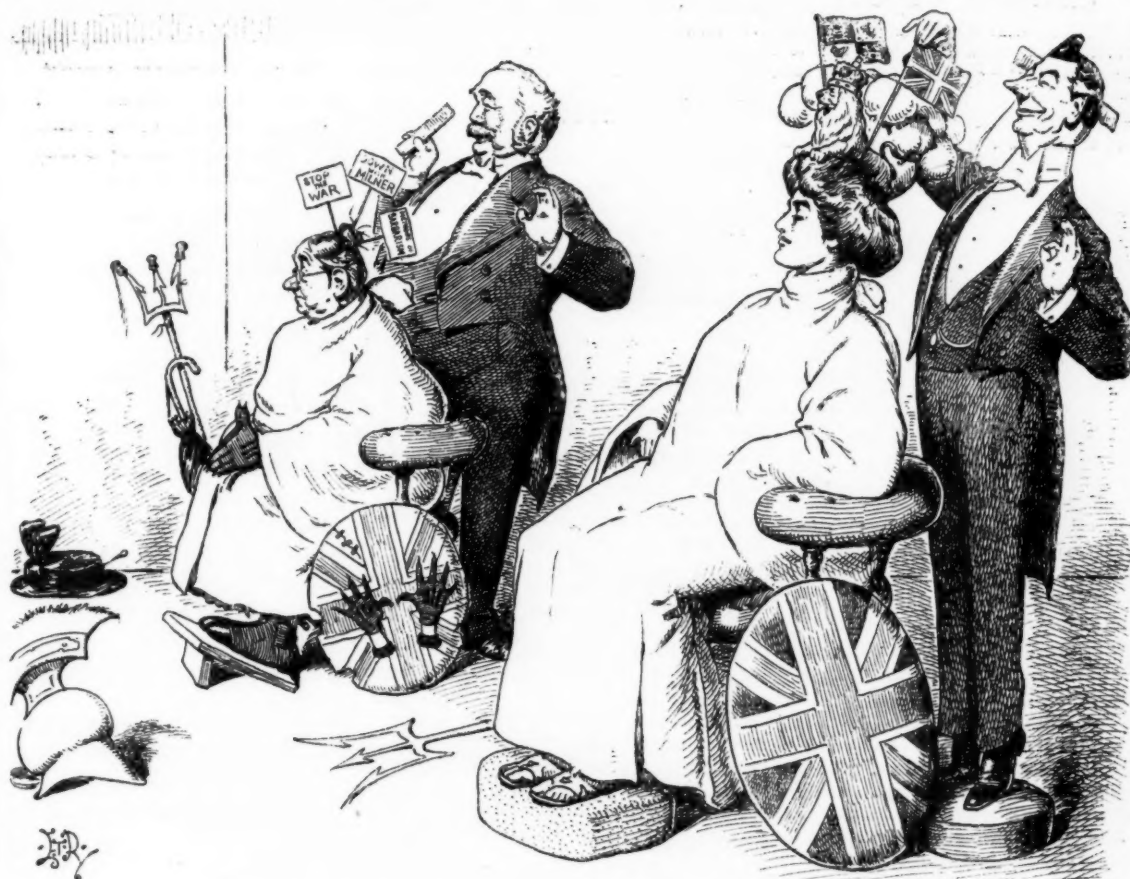
THE CHESTERFIELD HAMLET.

LORD R-S-B-RY (in leading rôle).

"THE 'PARTY'S' OUT OF JOINT:—O, CURSÈD SPITE,
THAT EVER I WAS 'ASKED' TO SET IT RIGHT!"

Act I., Scene 5, Mr. Punch's edition.

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THE BRITANNIA FANCY HAIR-DRESSING COMPETITION ;

OR, "METHODS OF BARBER-ISM."

["The Second Annual Exhibition of the Hairdresser's Art was given at the Portman Rooms on Tuesday evening."—*Daily Graphic*.]

WHY NOT?

It will be remembered that not very long ago an American newspaper secured a world-wide advertisement by handing over the editing of its columns for a week to the admired Mr. SHELDON.

A London evening paper, which need not be named here, is following the same policy, and is now announcing (upon the backs of ubiquitous sandwich-men) that it will be edited during Christmas week by the well-known Radical and Labour Agitator, Mr. GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

It was not to be supposed that the enterprise of this journal would not find immediate imitators. We are, therefore, able to announce that on the first of April next—

The *Times* will appear under the direction of Mr. DANIEL LENO.

The *Sportsman* will be edited by Mr. FREDERIC HARRISON.

Church Bells will be controlled by Mr. ALFRED HARMSWORTH. And

The *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette* will be written throughout by Sir WILFRID LAWSON.

Nor is this system of temporary appointments to important positions to be confined to Journalism, since we are officially informed that on the same date—

Mr. BRODRICK's post at the War Office will be occupied by the Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

Lord KITCHENER's command will be transferred for twenty-four hours to Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P.

Lord SALISBURY's place at Downing Street will be filled by Mr. THOMAS GIBSON BOWLES. And

The important duties attaching to the post of Poet Laureate will be discharged by Mrs. JANE OAKLEY.

In this way it is hoped that these painstaking officials will obtain a day's rest,

while new blood will, for one day at least, be infused into the veins of an effete Administration.

FIRE-FANCIES.

IN the fire I watch the embers glow,
Snatching at the fancies that they throw,
Till I feel the magic-working blaze
Bringing back the spell of other days—
Wonders dreamt of many years ago!

Gorgeous castles rise: about them, lo!
Knights and ladies hurry to and fro—
One and all they vanish as I gaze
In the fire!

Can I hope—if but a glimpse or so—
Something of these memories to show,
Haloed round with childhood's distant haze,

In this verse my clumsy pen essays
Thus to fashion?—or, must it, too, go
In the fire?

CHEERFUL CRICKET.

["The Australians are anxious that the test-matches of next season should be 'played to a finish,' and the M.C.C. is considering this proposal."]

THE twenty-seventh day of the first test-match between the English and



Australian elevens was full of interest. The crowd was, perhaps, less dense than when the match was commenced, more than a month ago, but yesterday's play at the Oval must have been watched by at least two dozen spectators. The proceedings commenced fairly punctually at one o'clock, when Messrs. NOBLE and TRUMPER, who have been together at the wickets for the last fortnight or so, resumed their innings. On the second day of the match, it will be remembered, the last English wicket fell with the score at 315. No doubt the total should have been larger, and the extraordinary rashness of our batsmen—who even risked a short run more than once—provoked the undisguised amazement of their rivals. For the succeeding twenty-five days, the Australians have retained possession of the wickets, and their methods have been marked by extreme caution. Up to the resumption of play yesterday, they had lost one wicket for 128 runs.

The start of yesterday's play was most exhilarating. Two leg-byes were actually scored in the first over, causing 130 to be hoisted on the telegraph board amid tremendous cheers. And, only twenty minutes later, Mr. TRUMPER made a magnificent snick for a single in the direction of long-slip. This brilliant hitting, as was to be expected, caused an immediate change in the bowling, RHODES being substituted for HAIGH at the Gasworks end. At 1.30 the usual interval for lunch was taken, but the players reappeared with commendable promptitude at 2.45. A spell of quiet play followed, though a finely-executed leg-stroke of Mr. NOBLE'S

very nearly resulted in an addition to the score. When, however, he tried to repeat the manoeuvre with the next ball, he was nearly caught, short-leg having moved up to within a few feet of the striker's bat. At 3.15 the teams retired for a short rest, the score standing at the same figure as at lunch time.

Matters became far more lively when play was once more resumed. Two wides, a bye, and nine singles were registered by the scorer within half-an-hour. Finally, Mr. NOBLE, whose play was of the most brilliant description, lashed out at a ball of HEARNE'S, and drove it to the boundary! It is very many days since such a stroke has been witnessed at the Oval, and it was loudly cheered. So severely was the bowling punished, that eleven more runs were put on before 4.15, when the players adjourned for their well-earned tea. It may be conjectured that the batsmen were then counselled to be prudent for the remainder of the day, since, beyond some brilliant stone-walling by Mr. TRUMPER—who would not be tempted by slow half-volleys to leg—the play after tea was almost dull. The batsmen remained undefeated till five o'clock, when stumps were drawn.

The game will be resumed to-day at the usual hour. As there seems little likelihood that this, the first test-match, will be finished before the end of the cricket-season, we understand that arrangements are being made for its continuance next year.

A. C. D.

THE TALE OF A COD.



["A codfish has been found near Cherbourg by some fishermen. On opening it they discovered a volume of contemporary English poetry. The book was quite undigested."—*Daily Paper*.]

Good people all, both fools and wise,
Come, listen unto me,
And you shall learn what danger lies
In minor poetry.

Near Cherbourg town there lived a cod,
Of youth and promise rare:
All blameless were the paths he trod
Among the codlings there.

The ordinary little sins
To which youth sometimes strays
He never knew: despite his fins
His were not fishy ways.

When low, he sought no fragrant cloud
To solace sorrow's stroke,
Although the bloated herrings vowed
That they were cured by smoke.

He took no alcoholic drink,
Though round the bar he'd stray;
And if a mermaid chanced to wink,
He looked the other way.

So lived he happy in his home
As any fish might be,
Till he was tempted by a tome
Of minor poetry.

A poem from the later quill
Of warlike R-DY-RD K.,
An ode by Sir—or is it still
Merc Mr. ALFRED A. ?—

A shriek from W-TS-X, or a sigh
From SW-NB-RNE'S patriot breast,
What codling, scarcely more than fry,
Could possibly digest?

A piece of H-NL-Y kept him long,
Though all his strength he plied;
But when at last he reach a song
Of M-R-D-TH, he died.

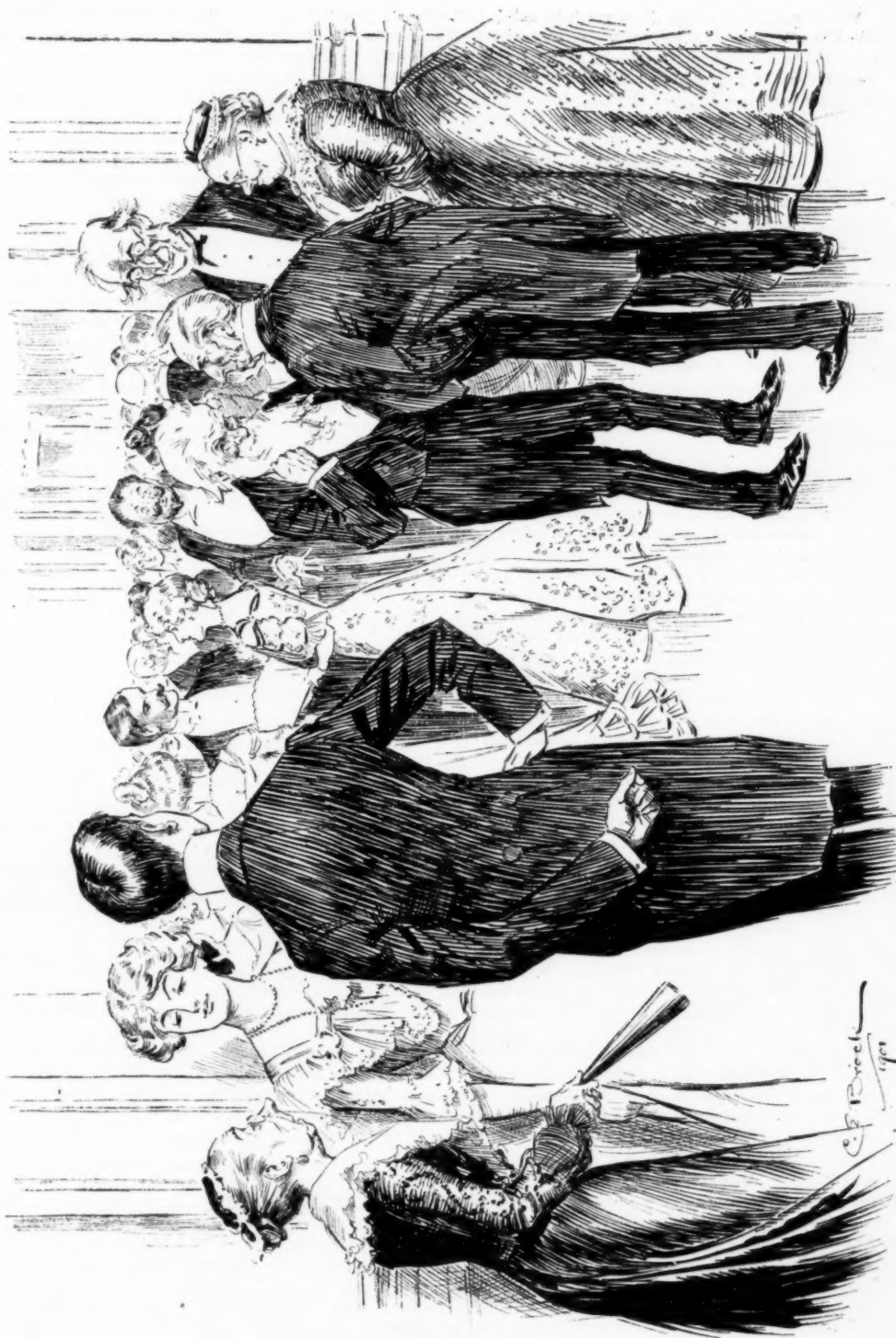
Then, O my youthful friends, beware!
There is a baneful curse
That lurks behind these bindings fair!
There's death in minor verse.

A GRAND OLD MARINER.

SAYS JAMES HAYLETT (whom Mr. Punch hails with "three cheers," as the crew did in the song of the "*Bay of Biscay O'*"), who has been a lifeboatman for fifty years, a long-lifeboatman, giving evidence before the Board of Trade inquiry into the Caister disaster (in which the tough old salt lost two sons), "The crew of the lifeboat did not wear life-belts on this occasion, and a good job too, or there would not have been one of them saved. They were cumbersome, and he seldom wore one." Does this not recall the expert opinion of the Waterloo veteran who, asked if he would not prefer being protected by cuirass and helmet against the steel and bullet of the enemy, replied that "if he had to be in the battle over again he should prefer fighting in his shirt-sleeves"? But "cumbersome" though the life-belts may appear to be, and doubtless are, yet would not the weight of evidence given by the "life-belted knights" be in favour of their use?



ALL THE DIFFERENCE.—"A Chamberlain" and "The Chamberlain."



AT A CONVERSAZIONE.

Young Lady. "I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW EVERYBODY HERE, MISS ODDIE!"
Miss Oddie. "OH, I KNOW MOST OF THEM. BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL STRANGE FACES OVER THERE."

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.



MR. WILKINS, who has done much to establish the fame of Sir RICHARD BURTON—who revealed to the world the merits of that far more estimable person, Lady BURTON—dipping his hand into the lucky-basket of the traveller's chance MS., has brought forth a volume of posthumous essays. *Wanderings in Three Continents* (HUTCHINSON) comprise narratives of BURTON's visits to Medina and Mecca, his ride to Harar, his journey to the heart of Africa, his call at Salt Lake City, when BRIGHAM YOUNG was in his prime; a mission to Dahomé, a trip up the Congo, a plunge into the interior of Brazil, and a voyage through Syria to Palmyra. On most of these enterprises—notably his adventurous journey to Mecca and Medina, disguised as a Moslem—he has written at length in familiar volumes. These papers were prepared in the form of lectures delivered before various audiences, and have, my Baronite testifies, the charm of lightness of touch proper to such occasions. They convey vivid impression of the dauntless enterprise of the pioneer of later travellers through that dark continent which to-day is so closely interwoven with the life of the British Empire.

Like all authors of a successful first book, Mrs. BURNETT's enemies are those of her own household. Whenever she writes a new book, the shadow of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* is cast upon it, and embarrassing comparisons are forthwith provoked. *The Making of a Marchioness* (SMITH, ELDER) stands the ordeal. The story, the characters, and the surroundings are altogether different. Mrs. BURNETT has even invented a new villain in the person of a ruthless ayah, faithful to her mistress with dog-like affection, pitiless to all who consciously or involuntarily assail her interests. *Emily Fox-Seton* is a fine study of a pure-minded, kind-hearted, absolutely blameless woman. My Baronite is aware that this is not a description of a heroine that will recommend her to the modern novel-reader. It is one of Mrs. BURNETT's new successes that she makes her interesting, whether as maiden or Marchioness. *Lady Maria Bayne* lives up to her reputation as "the cleverest, sharpest-tongued, smartest old woman in London." *Lord Walderhurst* admirably fills the part assigned to him. He leads off in two fine scenes—where he asks the maiden to marry him, and where, kneeling by what the doctors thought was the deathbed of the Marchioness, he literally calls her back to life.

My Baronite, weary of much reading of new books, turns gratefully to a new edition of the *Essays of Elia*, just issued by Mr. METHUEN. All, all are here, the well-remembered chapters—The Southsea House, Christ's Hospital, Mackery End, Grace Before Meat, Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist, and the rest. Musing over an old colleague at Southsea House, "the polished man of letters" of the office, LAMB wrote: "Thy wit is a little gone by in these fastidious days; thy topics are staled by the new-born gauds of the time." It is delightful to find afresh how little this lament attaches to *Elia*. His gentle humour never palls, nor does the infinite variety of his fancy stale. The *Essays* are introduced by a pleasant preface by E. V. LUCAS, and there are many illustrations by Mr. GARTH JONES. My Baronite does not care about the binding of the volume. There is about it something alike in colour and design that is un-Lamb-like. On the other hand, print and paper are thoroughly satisfying.

Twenty years ago GRANT ALLEN contributed to a London evening paper a series of erudite and interesting historical notes on English towns and counties. Under the title *County and Town in England* (GRANT RICHARDS) they are re-printed, with a prefatory note by the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. In a small space GRANT ALLEN, with practised hand, compressed the ancient history of many shires,

towns and hamlets. My Baronite, reading the chapter dealing with his own county, and wandering on through others, finds an amazing measure of research picturesquely scattered.

The Baron has received a book with a somewhat severe exterior entitled *Bardell versus Pickwick*, edited by PERCY FITZGERALD (ELLIOT STOCK), and the Baron would most carefully criticise its contents in detail were he not "given pause" on the threshold of his undertaking by the tone of this highly respected writer's work. Mr. PERCY FITZGERALD follows his leader, the late Sir FRANK LOCKWOOD, Q.C., who in an able lecture on this very subject, boldly attempted to whitewash the dingy reputation of *Messrs. Dodson and Fogg*. The Baron cannot deny that Mr. FITZ G.'s efforts, like those of his leader, have achieved a certain amount of success. Also, Mr. FITZ G. somewhat discredits Mr. *Perker*, that model of a family solicitor! On these grounds the Baron is decidedly anxious as to the Pickwickian future of his PERCY FITZ. Is he going to round on his old friends and whilom favourites? Is he going to write a treatise extolling Dodson-and-Foggism at the expense of *Perkerism*? Where will he stop? Will he elevate the character and actions of *Jackson*, the attorneys' clerk, to the depreciation of *Sam Weller*, the serving man? And, being on the downward war-path, will he stop short of branding Mr. *Pickwick* himself as one addicted to riotous living, a gluttonous man, a wine-and-spirit-bibber, a conceited, bald-headed, elderly satyr, misleader of youth intrusted to his care, and the ill-adviser of virtuous maidens? It looks as though Mr. PERCY were about to give us a series of *Fitz and Starts*! Let Mr. PERCY FITZ G. be warned in time by the

BARON DE B.-W.



ADDITIONAL THEATRICAL REGULATIONS.

(At the Service of the L.C. and the L.C.C.)

Not only no living person shall be introduced in a modern play, but it shall be illegal to show hansom cab horses, hounds, and steam launches floating in tanks. To secure safety from fire, any member of the audience admitted by an order shall not be allowed to take his seat unless he can show a medical certificate warranting him certain to remain awake until the end of the performance.

The iron curtain shall descend on the first night of a new play when the senior critic present has had enough of it. When lowered, the iron curtain shall not be raised again for at least twenty-four hours.

Not only shall authorised members of the L.C.C. be permitted to be present at all performances of a popular character, but the privilege shall be further extended to their wives, their cousins, their sisters and their aunts. Not only shall refreshments be illegal in the auditorium, but all over the premises, and for a radius round the theatre of one square mile.

All the above regulations—and anything else that occurs to anyone—shall be carried out to prove that technical knowledge, worldly tact and general good feeling is not in any sense requisite in the proper management of a play-house.

"HURRAH FOR THE COSAQUE!" is an old chorus that merry families of youthful BROWNS, JONESSES, and ROBINSONS might appropriately revive and chant at Christmas time when the kousekeeper goes to the cupboard where is kept the Christmas crackery, and produces therefrom the "Table-decoration Cosagues" and the "Toy Symphony Cracker Box" invented this year by the ingenious TOM SMITH. Pull away, boys and girls! The reports that reach us from the crackers are as startling as ever, and the sparks from the anvil of the Tom-Smithy as brilliant.

JOCOSA LYRA.

THE simultaneous publication of two anthologies of light verse—one of them, by the way, is entitled an *Anthology of Humorous Verse*—leads one to suppose that the great reading public has begun to take a serious interest in verse that is anything but serious, or, to express the matter perhaps with greater accuracy, disguises its occasional seriousness by the wearing of the jester's cap and the jingle of his bells. We may suppose, in fact, that there exists a paying public which has realised that the writing of good light verse demands very high qualities, and that a mere comic rattle with a liberal amount of puns thrown in does not quite fill the bill. This is a matter for congratulation, since the art of writing light verse is not an easy one, and the more its professors are sustained and encouraged, the higher will be their standard and the more valuable their efforts.

English poetry has a majestic record of many centuries, but it is only in comparatively recent times that the lighter Muse has gained her due recognition amongst us. Why did she come so late and in so timid a fashion? HORACE, MARTIAL and CATULLUS—what are they but writers of light verse? Our forefathers read them and knew them by heart, but those who rhymed shunned these shining examples,

and for the most part preferred Epics, Dramas, Odes—anything rather than the sparkling little piece in which a friend speaks to his friends about matters of everyday experience, redeeming them from commonness by the gaiety of his humour and the perfection of his phrases. I do not forget SUCKLING or PRIOR, but they were exceptions. Our earlier poets, when they affected humour and lightness, for the most part trod their measure with a heavy foot. For instance, both the anthologies to which I have referred include MILTON's "On the Oxford Carrier." Where is its lightness or its humour? In the midst of its frisking companions it has all the effect that might be produced by an ancient war-horse, fully eparisoned, prancing about among



THE GOOD FAIRY ELECTRA OF THE CONTINUOUS CURRENT
BANISHES THE DEMON KING SULPHUR.

[“The Directors of the Metropolitan Underground Railway announced yesterday that no time will be lost in proceeding with the installation of electric traction.”—*Daily Mail*.]

the ponies in a polo-field.

Or, take a much later period, and consider “John Gilpin.” Both collections include it. Indeed, I suppose one of an editor's fixed points in preparing his selection would necessarily be “John Gilpin.” Shall I be accused of treason if I hint that the reputation and endurance of this piece are a matter for wonder? How did it, even in an age that joked with difficulty, produce so overpowering an effect? The narrative is bald and portentously lengthy, the workmanship is not felicitous, the theme itself is trite and obvious. Something there must have been in the nature of citizens and train band captains and their frugal wives that produced in the minds of our forefathers an exquisite sense of incongruity, as of something that had no serious right to exist, or, if it did exist, was by that mere fact intensely humorous and comic, a proper subject for the most obvious ridicule. Echoes of their laughter still come to us, and since even the echoes of laughter are infectious, we laugh too, though the jest has lost its savour.

On the whole I think it is a fairly accurate statement—it is Mr. A. C. DEANE who has made it—that the tradition of light verse to which we now hold was originated by CANNING, continued by the brothers SMITH,

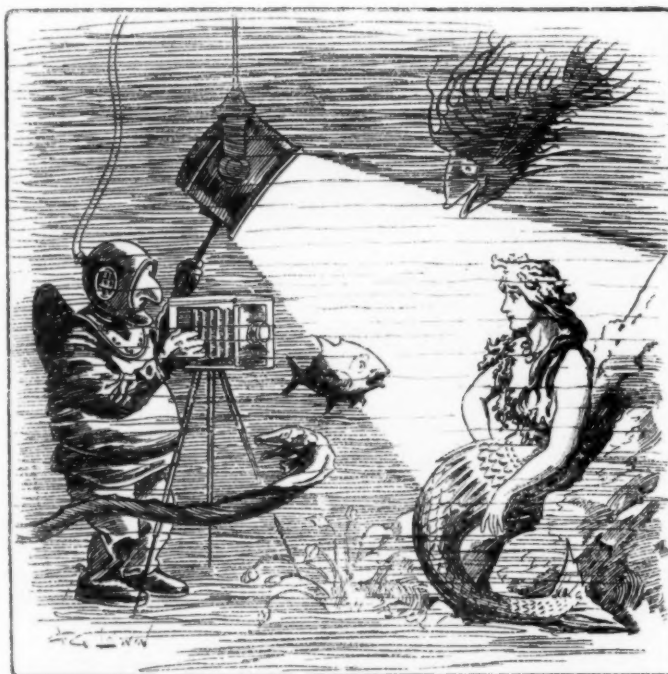
and finally established by WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED. Before that, the efforts were spasmodic, the occasional divagations of poets who put away their thunderbolts and sported for an hour with Amaryllis in the shade. Since that time we have come to recognise as poets those who, like THACKERAY, or FREDERICK LOCKER, or CALVERLEY, or Mr. AUSTIN DOBSON (to take a few recent examples only), were the skirmishers of the army of the Muses, gay companions who rode in light order with a bandolier filled with jest, and humour, and wit. And who shall say that they cannot win a battle as well as the Long Tom and Lyddite Shells of Mr. SWINBURNE?

You may begin by trying to make a distinction between verse

that is light and verse that is humorous, but you will find in the end that it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line. Your two selections will overlap at a hundred points. How, for instance, are you to deal with parody, whether it be the parody which has for its object the ridicule of its original, or the other parody which merely takes the form of that original and adapts it to another purpose? How again are you to distribute TOM HOOD, a mere word-twister on one side of his mind, shading off through satire and pure light verse into the greater poetry? These are only two examples of the difficulties that meet you. The fact is, of course, that such verse, whether you call it light or humorous, has many different forms, and the most judicious editor may well be puzzled as he makes his choice.

In its best and most attractive form it requires many qualities. Its writer must, if he is to succeed, have a correct ear, a fine sense of scholarship, a happy knack of fitting his most difficult rhymes so closely into the texture of his subject that they may seem inevitably a part of it, and an easy, rippling flow of perfectly appropriate language. Let him have a genial and friendly outlook on humanity, the outlook of a man who has lived in the world, and is able to speak of its struggles, and its disappointments with a humour that is always kindly and a pathos that is never (at least, in expression) tragic. If his verse sometimes trembles into tears it must be only for a moment, and a smile must go with the tears. Is there any man who combines these requisites better than THACKERAY, and this, though he has ventured to make "safron" rhyme to "tavern," and "long year" to "frontier," an execrable collocation? Gaiety that is touched with regret, humour that is never without humanity, and a mellow, tolerant wisdom—these are the noble qualities of THACKERAY'S verse. His workmanship, though it is generally fine, is not always impeccable, but he never allowed his workmanship to master him, and, therefore, he always made the effect he wished to make.

CALVERLEY too must have his place, a very high one, though not quite beside THACKERAY. Where else can you find such



"CATCHING A MERMAID!"

[Submarine Photography is now possible.]

clean perfection of form, such amazing and almost devilish cleverness, or so light a touch? The tenderness that THACKERAY had he did not pretend to. His verse sparkles like a well-cut diamond, but there is no such glow about it as that which comes from "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," or, to take another instance, from TOM HOOD'S "I remember, I remember." Of living men I must not speak, except to affirm my belief that in the skilful exercise of their pleasant art they are not inferior to their predecessors. They maintain the good tradition and, in maintaining it, each of them asserts his own individuality both of style and matter.

SHADOWS OF FUTURITY.

[“In consequence of the inferior quality of modern

printing ink, it is a question whether the works of writers of to-day will survive a century.”—*Daily Paper.*]

OH! Oh! Horror and woe!
Hapless Futurity, what a sad blow!
Never to know the writers that strow
With the flowers of culture the paths that we go!
Ah me! to think that inferior ink
Your souls in such Stygian darkness should sink,
That ye never shall welcome those meteors bright
That gladden our sight
With their radiance bright,
And scatter the numberless horrors of night!
For you, O Futurity, fast our tears flow!
Oh! Oh! Horror and woe!



His swish is law.

Oimoi! Otototoi!
Will you survive it? Your hours how
employ
When troubles annoy and the vulgar alloy
Of sorrow is mixed with the gold of your
joy?
In vain, all in vain will you sigh for the
brain
Of a M-RIE C-R-LLI, a GR-ND, a H-LL C-NE,
Or those soul-stirring odes that the public
delight
With their brilliancy bright,
Unapproachable quite,
Which none but our England's own ALFRED
could write!
But these are not fated for you to enjoy.
Oimoi! Otototoi!